



**TRANSFORM  
BALTIMORE**

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**City of Baltimore**  
Sheila Dixon  
Mayor

*Introducing...*

# THE ZONING CODE REWRITE.

Department of Planning

Douglas B. McCoach, III, Director

Laurie Feinberg, Project Manager

# What is TransForm Baltimore?



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**TransForm Baltimore:** The Zoning Code Rewrite is a Department of Planning initiative that is called for in LIVE-EARN-PLAY-LEARN the City of Baltimore's Comprehensive Master Plan for 2007-2012.



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# What is TransForm Baltimore?

**TransForm Baltimore** will involve an extensive community outreach campaign that will gather input from citizens, businesses, the development community, professional organizations and others who share a commitment to the future of the City of Baltimore.



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# What is TransForm Baltimore?

**TransForm Baltimore** will:

- Review,
- Rewrite and
- Replace

the City of Baltimore's current  
zoning code.





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# Why Transform Baltimore?

- In 2007 the BMZA heard over **1,095** cases needing **variances**
- Baltimore has over **200 overlay districts**, including PUDs and Urban Renewal Plans.
- Approximately **80% of all houses** in R-8 Districts do **not conform** to the existing zoning code



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# Why Transform Baltimore?

- The current Baltimore City Zoning Code is a law that was enacted in 1971.
- The Code has not been comprehensively evaluated or updated since then.
- In 2006, the City adopted LIVE EARN PLAY LEARN; the City's first Comprehensive Master in over 35 years.



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# Why Transform Baltimore?

A major recommendation of the new Comprehensive Plan is to modernize the zoning code for the entire City.

This will allow the City to:

- Simplify the code,
- Create new tools to support and guide City investments, and
- Preserve the unique character of Baltimore City.





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# The History of Zoning in Baltimore

- Baltimore's first Zoning Ordinance was approved in May 1923.
- The City's grid system was established with the 1893 Topographical Survey Commission. The Washington Monument is the center of the grid.
- In 1904, Maryland Law prohibited any buildings within one block of the Washington Monument from exceeding the height of the monument.
- The Baltimore Fire of 1904 resulted in the creation of the "Burnt District Commission" -- an early city planning effort.
- In 1931 the zoning code was adapted to include use, height and area districts.
- In 1950 a Zoning Commission was created. This commission began the first comprehensive zoning code rewrite.
- The work of the original 1950 Zoning Commission was adopted as the new zoning code in 1971.





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# Zoning 101: What is zoning and what is its purpose?

**Zoning** is a tool local governments use to regulate the use of land and buildings.

A **Zoning Code** is a law passed by local governments regulating the size, type, structure, nature and use of land or buildings.

Zoning also regulates such things as parking and signage.



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# Zoning 101: What is zoning and what is its purpose?

- To protect the general health, safety and welfare of our citizens.
- To create stability and predictability within zoning districts that each allow a range of compatible uses and building types.
- To establish the uses and allowable size of a structure within a zoning district so that they do not negatively impact the parcels in an adjacent zoning district.



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# Zoning 101: What are the current zoning categories?

The Baltimore zoning code has four basic zoning categories:

- **Residential (R)**
- **Office-residential, (OR)**
- **Business (B) and**
- **Manufacturing. (M)**





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# Zoning 101: How does zoning affect me and my neighborhood?

- Applying zoning regulations is the first step in determining what is allowed to be built on a property.
- Zoning helps determine what uses are permitted within the area, as well as the size and types of buildings that could be built in the future.



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# Zoning 101: Is there anything zoning CAN'T do?

- Zoning does not distinguish between “good” businesses and “bad” businesses.
- Zoning does not determine human behavior.



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# Summary of Zoning and Land Use Recommendations from the Comprehensive Master Plan

The following goals are  
recommended in *the  
Comprehensive Master Plan*:

- **Ease of Use** – Brief and User Friendly
- **Flexibility** – reflect historic patterns while adapting to contemporary development needs
- **Update Use Categories** – reflect modern land use practices
- **Design Standards** – creating and preserving quality places
- **Parking Standards** – encouraging transit oriented development and reducing dominance of automobiles

Are you part  
of the **PLAN...**  
to make  
Balti**MORE** than ever?







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# Proposed Land Use Categories from the Comprehensive Plan

## **Residential Districts**

### **Mixed-Use with Residential**

- Commercial Mixed-Use Nodes
- Office-Residence
- Neighborhood District
- Bioscience/University/Hospital Districts
- Transit Oriented Development (TOD)

### **Mixed-Use Zones Without Residential**

- Industrial Mixed-Use
- Light Industrial Mixed-Use
- Industrial
- Maritime Industrial (MIZOD)

## **Parks & Open Space**



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## The Comprehensive Plan – Growth Promotion Areas

The State of Maryland has designated the City of Baltimore as a Smart Growth Area.

Growth Promotion Areas meet the following criteria:

1. Existing roads, utilities, other infrastructure and services can accommodate growth while minimizing environmental impacts;
2. Significant growth capacity demonstrated by a 20% or greater of vacant housing stock and/or land;
3. The market failed to spur sustainable economic and community development;
4. Additional government resources are required to leverage or generate significant private investment.
5. Plans have been adopted that will add stability; and
6. Transit Oriented Development is an opportunity.



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# Rezoning in Other Cities – We are in good company.

- Philadelphia
- Chicago
- Milwaukee
- Minneapolis
- Pittsburgh
- Denver





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## TransForm Baltimore Process Timeline

### REVIEW

*Fall 2007-Winter 2008*

Diagnose the existing Zoning Code – what is working, what isn't working, and what new techniques and tools are being used and developed in other cities?

### REWRITE

*Winter- 2008 - Spring 2009*

Re-write the zoning code, with guidance from national team of consultants, to develop new tools and improve zoning categories.

### REPLACE

*Spring-Summer 2009*

Introduce a Draft Zoning Code and Map

Adopt a new Zoning Code

*Fall 2009*



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# How can you get involved in TransForm Baltimore?

## NEXT STEPS...

- Sign up for e-mailing list
- Join a future working group
- Participate in future meetings, events and activities
- Check the Department of Planning website for updates :  
[www.baltimorecity.gov/government/planning](http://www.baltimorecity.gov/government/planning)